

The BANNER of BLUE

by S. R. Crockett

(Copyright, 1901, by S. R. Crockett.)

CHAPTER XXXV.—(Continued.)

My father sighed, but he did not ask any further questions. He knew well enough all he wanted from that one word—and more.

"Fairlie," he went on, "I want those documents put in the hands of Mr. John Glendonwyn. I cannot see him myself. My oath does not make that possible. But I am just as much man to see that he has nothing to do with our tribulation. Also he is being persecuted by the same ill-behaved father who has brought these things upon us. I am going to leave the neighborhood. I have had it on my mind to do so ever since Kate's home-coming. Only I delayed for her sake, fearing the effect upon her mind. But now when she is in such altered case about her husband—why I think the sooner we go the better. Now I had thought to sell the house and land for what they would fetch. Gregory Glendonwyn would certainly give a great price. They have long been an eyesore to him in the midst of his acreage. But I have seen a better way. It has been revealed to me.

"I am an old man, I have spent but little money all my days save on your rearing, Fairlie. There will be enough for Kate and you. The boys are better without any. Let them work with their hands as their father did, or with their heads if Heaven grant them wit."

Then he tapped my knee lightly with the papers in his hand.

"I want you to take these documents to John Glendonwyn (I noted that he left out the Mr. that time). I will tell you what they are. I have effected the transference of all my property here—that is, of the house and land—it is just five acres in all—to him in trust for his congregation. There is an excellent site for the kirk they are anxious to build at a place which I have designated upon the plan, at the great bend of the water, with access from the main road and a view of the river. Also Gregory Glendonwyn will see it from nearly every window in his castle, which adds greatly to its eligibility."

"Oh, father," I cried, throwing myself on his neck, "you are so good and kind! You have forgiven John."

He smiled a curious smile—a smile with a kind of sickly pallor in it.

"There is one thing for which I can never forgive him," he said.

"And what is that?" I cried, "I am sure—sure that he is innocent!"

"Nay he is guilty," said my father, sternly. "He was born his father's son. He cannot clear himself of that."

But he said it in such a way that I made sure in my heart that, though he could not give in, he was by no means as angry with John as he made out. Which partly excuses what comes after—or at least explains it.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A Lion in the Path.

I took all that night to think how I should convey the papers to John. Indeed, the problem required a great deal of thought. It seemed impossible that I should get to the herds house at Bennagower—that is alone. And yet I knew not how else to obey my father. I thought of Veronica, but—it did not seem as if I would like to have her. She had called once since our coming, Rupert's death, but, of course, without seeing me. And the very body said that she was going to marry John. No, she was very kind, but—I could not ask Veronica.

Then a thought came to me and I laughed—yes, for the first time for many months, I seemed to me, I laughed aloud. I would go to Bennagower, but—I would take little Johnny with me!

And as soon as I thought of it I sat down and wrote to Mrs. Colstoun, asking her to let Johnny come out to me for two or three days. I told her we were going away. (She already knew that of our troubles by letter—it was my only comfort—and she read them to her husband, and John called. Because, you know, I had promised to hold no communication with John without my father's knowledge.) So I told her we were going quite away and it would be a comfort to me to have Johnny for a little first. And I promised to hear him his lessons and to see that he did not eat too many gooseberries out of the garden.

And Mrs. Colstoun was so good and kind that she brought him out herself and sat in the garden with me and talked a long time.

It was quite delightful to have little Johnny again. He was, if anything, fonder of me than ever, and scampered all over the joinder's shed and out his fingers on the tools and was lost in the gooseberry garden and fell off a tree, and did so many things all in one evening that I was afraid he would never last till I had need of him—about going up Bennagower, I mean. All the same it was cheerful having him. Even my father owned that.

As for Kate, she did not seem clearly to understand. Sometimes she talked to him as if he were her own Babe Rupert grown up, and then again she would stand over the cot and look so puzzled, saying: "This is my real baby— isn't it? I fear I have been talking foolishly."

So the next afternoon—it was June and warm—I went away up the burnside toward the herds house of Bennagower, with little Johnny sporting about me like a frolicsome puppy. I knew that I was likely to find the minister at home. For Will had seen old Anton on the way down to the post-office and he told him that the minister had been out all the morning, seeing about people over by in the village, but would be home for what that Auld Duncan called lunch—"a daffie word for your dinner," the Camerounian elder thought.

I had the papers about Boncroft in a little leather portfolio, in which I used to carry the children's exercises to the academy of Kilgour. And when I got near the house, which stood out white and bonny on a little knoll, with the garden beneath it and the burn roaring through the Bannan Linn fifty yards to the west, I saw old Babby, John's nurse, coming to meet me—as it were, in a great hurry.

I called Johnny to come up and take my hand, and then in a minute there was Babby standing in front of me, as if to block the way to the house. At another time I would have laughed. But then I only said, with dignity, "I wish to see Mr. John Glendonwyn. Is he at home?"

"It's no his hour for seeing folk—this," she retorted, with some acrimony. "Na, certes! I would like to ken whaur the mornin' we do free, gin the minister had mocht to do but waste his time wi' idle vagrants and run-the-counties—been kind to me."

"Oh, Babby," I said, smiling, "I do hope that you do not mean me!"

"Dinna, Babby me, Mistress Fairlie Glendonwyn," she cried, with a toss of her head. "Look that are me lang awa' frae hame an' nae reason gien, may expect to be caaled queer names. Aye, they maun that!"

"Well, Babby," I began—but got no further.

"Did I no tell ye no to 'Babby' me," she cried, "Miss Barbara, if ye please"—aye, and it may be something else afore lang. For I have been kenned and refuted a decent will-doing woman a' my days, that played nae pliskies, but gaed lik day to the kirk and bode theither the kitchen—never missing a lawfu' day-me and my father's afore me!"

"Well, Miss Barbara," I struck in, as soon as I could get a word, "I am obliged for what you tell me. But I must see Mr. Glendonwyn at once, as I cannot stay—and my business is important."

"Stay," she cried, catching at the word, "stay—na, it will be a short day and a lang ere ony like ye are asked to stay in a minister's house. Did ye no hear, young woman, that I have already telled ye in sae many words o' the English language (maybe it is no teachin in schules noo—

nae reason gien, may expect to be caaled queer names. Aye, they maun that!"

"Well, Babby," I began—but got no further.

"Did I no tell ye no to 'Babby' me," she cried, "Miss Barbara, if ye please"—aye, and it may be something else afore lang. For I have been kenned and refuted a decent will-doing woman a' my days, that played nae pliskies, but gaed lik day to the kirk and bode theither the kitchen—never missing a lawfu' day-me and my father's afore me!"

"Well, Miss Barbara," I struck in, as soon as I could get a word, "I am obliged for what you tell me. But I must see Mr. Glendonwyn at once, as I cannot stay—and my business is important."

"Stay," she cried, catching at the word, "stay—na, it will be a short day and a lang ere ony like ye are asked to stay in a minister's house. Did ye no hear, young woman, that I have already telled ye in sae many words o' the English language (maybe it is no teachin in schules noo—

And he bent down and whispered in her ear. I could not hear what he said. But Babby's reply is, however, worthy of recording, inasmuch as it caused me many conjectures at the time.

"I never thought o' looking aneath his pillow when he was sleepin'!" she said. With a very curiously bow the old butler asked my pardon for keeping me waiting and then apologized frankly for the mistake made by Babby!

"She is a woman well stricken in years, mem," he said, "ye'll just need to excuse Babby!"

"Deed an' I'm no near sae stricken in years as your ain sel," Duncan Grier—cried the indignant lady, "na—no by a half half-dizen o' years! Hear ye that!"

But Duncan waved her away with calm superiority, conducted me up the rugged path with the height of dignified embarrassment.

"Babby, gang ye into the hoose and get a dish o' tea ready," he cried. "Dinna spare the leaves! And abune a', see that the water is boiling afore ye poor it in. In-deed, mem, Mr. John would have been maist disappointed if he had misaed your vesmit. (Come out o' that ye illest wee baistie!) I get pardon, miss, but I am afraid your young gentleman will break his neck if he persists in crawling on the roof! There, what did I tell ye, ye camstery hule o' a redeulous callant!"

Little Johnny had indeed fallen through the thatched and rotted roof of one of the seldom used sheds in rear of the farm-stand and was presently rescued, howling lustily, by a single leg which appeared waving among the debris. Duncan held him in the air as he might have done a kicking rabbit, and quaked him vigorously. In-deed, I fear that he performed the operation with so heavy a hand that in more than one sense it might be called a dressing-down.

I think the blood must have risen quickly to my face, for I could feel myself turning hot all over.

So intent was I on the fate of my ally that I did not notice that John Glendonwyn himself was standing, with a strange expression of wonder on his face, in the doorway of his cot. He was, I saw once, much paler than he had been—indeed, thinner altogether—but with a determined, masterful and many expression such as I had never seen on his face before.

And the next moment I was holding his hand, while he was asking concerning my father, my sister and the others—doubtless wondering what in the world had brought me to the herds house in the Bennagower.

By this time Duncan Grier had completed little Johnny's toilet and set that enterprising infant on his feet. Johnny was crying, if one may use that expression of such a darling child, most violently. And old Babby had much difficulty in conducting him off respectfully before his young master, owing to the fact that in the midst of his explanations he would suddenly find himself upon round by the frantic lunge of Johnny, who, having set down poor old Duncan as the cause of his misfortunes, was now trying furiously to reach his black stockings with his little iron-shod shoes.

Whereupon I pounced upon Johnny and bade him be a good boy or I would dispatch him back to his mother that same night.

"Shan't go!" exclaimed the hopeful son of the house. "I doesn't min' mother much, but I hate school. Ye, I do! New teacher is so ugly!"

"Oh, Johnny," I said reproachfully, "but if she is good, what does it matter whether she is pretty or not?"

"Does though!" said Johnny, struggling to be free. "He finks so—(here he pointed to John Glendonwyn) doesn't turn to our school noo, but attin' new teacher turned. Mother—she thaid so only last night!"

"Would you like some lumps of sugar, Johnny," said John, hastily, from the doorway. "I am afraid there are no brandy balls up here. You should have sent me word you were coming."

"What are you saying?" said Johnny (which being interpreted, meant that Johnny desired to be introduced to the aforesaid lumps of sugar).

"Come away in!" said John. "I have but one room, but the good people make me both comfortable and happy—that is, as far as I can be—right now."

He stopped and looked very curiously at me. It was certainly a beautifully neat little room, with no appearance of a bed in it that I could see except that there was a screen in the corner which had evidently served (and probably did so yet) upon occasion as a clothes horse.

After he had brought us into his room John Glendonwyn stood before me scarce

knowing what to say, waiting, I think, till I had opened my mission. But I knew better than to attempt anything of the kind with parity.

"Will you give Johnny some sugar?" I said, "that will keep him quiet till it is done!"

John went out quickly, instantly followed by Johnny, who flung himself off the seat on which I had just arranged him, and plunged after his host through the door, shouting, "Me tumlin' to see you get it minsel!"

"Think I will not give you enough?" said John. "Have the loaf!"

"Fanks, I will!" said the literal Johnny, and appeared forthwith in the tiny "ben-the-house" with a scarce-broken white cone of lump-sugar under his arm.

"Johnny, dear," I remonstrated, "you will make yourself ill. Give it to me and I will break you off a bit."

"No, an't!" said the obedient little man. "Have eaten free—O, ever so much bigger nor that! 'Tis all right, taster, dear!"

Then I began to tell John Glendonwyn the message my father had sent me to deliver and when he heard of the gift of the house and five acres of freehold he rose from his chair excitedly.

"O," he cried, "it is like new life to me to even hear of the possibility of such a thing. But we cannot take the property as a gift. That is not to be thought of—we will give your father any rent—we will pay a price."

"John," I said, "you ought to know my father by this time. What he does he will do his own way, if at all. All is completed. There are the title deeds!"

"While John stood, struck dumb by the wonder of the news, the door was opened

And he bent down and whispered in her ear. I could not hear what he said. But Babby's reply is, however, worthy of recording, inasmuch as it caused me many conjectures at the time.

"I never thought o' looking aneath his pillow when he was sleepin'!" she said. With a very curiously bow the old butler asked my pardon for keeping me waiting and then apologized frankly for the mistake made by Babby!

"She is a woman well stricken in years, mem," he said, "ye'll just need to excuse Babby!"

"Deed an' I'm no near sae stricken in years as your ain sel," Duncan Grier—cried the indignant lady, "na—no by a half half-dizen o' years! Hear ye that!"

But Duncan waved her away with calm superiority, conducted me up the rugged path with the height of dignified embarrassment.

"Babby, gang ye into the hoose and get a dish o' tea ready," he cried. "Dinna spare the leaves! And abune a', see that the water is boiling afore ye poor it in. In-deed, mem, Mr. John would have been maist disappointed if he had misaed your vesmit. (Come out o' that ye illest wee baistie!) I get pardon, miss, but I am afraid your young gentleman will break his neck if he persists in crawling on the roof! There, what did I tell ye, ye camstery hule o' a redeulous callant!"

Little Johnny had indeed fallen through the thatched and rotted roof of one of the seldom used sheds in rear of the farm-stand and was presently rescued, howling lustily, by a single leg which appeared waving among the debris. Duncan held him in the air as he might have done a kicking rabbit, and quaked him vigorously. In-deed, I fear that he performed the operation with so heavy a hand that in more than one sense it might be called a dressing-down.

I think the blood must have risen quickly to my face, for I could feel myself turning hot all over.

So intent was I on the fate of my ally that I did not notice that John Glendonwyn himself was standing, with a strange expression of wonder on his face, in the doorway of his cot. He was, I saw once, much paler than he had been—indeed, thinner altogether—but with a determined, masterful and many expression such as I had never seen on his face before.

And the next moment I was holding his hand, while he was asking concerning my father, my sister and the others—doubtless wondering what in the world had brought me to the herds house in the Bennagower.

By this time Duncan Grier had completed little Johnny's toilet and set that enterprising infant on his feet. Johnny was crying, if one may use that expression of such a darling child, most violently. And old Babby had much difficulty in conducting him off respectfully before his young master, owing to the fact that in the midst of his explanations he would suddenly find himself upon round by the frantic lunge of Johnny, who, having set down poor old Duncan as the cause of his misfortunes, was now trying furiously to reach his black stockings with his little iron-shod shoes.

Whereupon I pounced upon Johnny and bade him be a good boy or I would dispatch him back to his mother that same night.

"Shan't go!" exclaimed the hopeful son of the house. "I doesn't min' mother much, but I hate school. Ye, I do! New teacher is so ugly!"

"Oh, Johnny," I said reproachfully, "but if she is good, what does it matter whether she is pretty or not?"

"Does though!" said Johnny, struggling to be free. "He finks so—(here he pointed to John Glendonwyn) doesn't turn to our school noo, but attin' new teacher turned. Mother—she thaid so only last night!"

"Would you like some lumps of sugar, Johnny," said John, hastily, from the doorway. "I am afraid there are no brandy balls up here. You should have sent me word you were coming."

"What are you saying?" said Johnny (which being interpreted, meant that Johnny desired to be introduced to the aforesaid lumps of sugar).

"Come away in!" said John. "I have but one room, but the good people make me both comfortable and happy—that is, as far as I can be—right now."

He stopped and looked very curiously at me. It was certainly a beautifully neat little room, with no appearance of a bed in it that I could see except that there was a screen in the corner which had evidently served (and probably did so yet) upon occasion as a clothes horse.

After he had brought us into his room John Glendonwyn stood before me scarce

knowing what to say, waiting, I think, till I had opened my mission. But I knew better than to attempt anything of the kind with parity.

"Will you give Johnny some sugar?" I said, "that will keep him quiet till it is done!"

John went out quickly, instantly followed by Johnny, who flung himself off the seat on which I had just arranged him, and plunged after his host through the door, shouting, "Me tumlin' to see you get it minsel!"

"Think I will not give you enough?" said John. "Have the loaf!"

"Fanks, I will!" said the literal Johnny, and appeared forthwith in the tiny "ben-the-house" with a scarce-broken white cone of lump-sugar under his arm.

"Johnny, dear," I remonstrated, "you will make yourself ill. Give it to me and I will break you off a bit."

"No, an't!" said the obedient little man. "Have eaten free—O, ever so much bigger nor that! 'Tis all right, taster, dear!"

Then I began to tell John Glendonwyn the message my father had sent me to deliver and when he heard of the gift of the house and five acres of freehold he rose from his chair excitedly.

"O," he cried, "it is like new life to me to even hear of the possibility of such a thing. But we cannot take the property as a gift. That is not to be thought of—we will give your father any rent—we will pay a price."

"John," I said, "you ought to know my father by this time. What he does he will do his own way, if at all. All is completed. There are the title deeds!"

"While John stood, struck dumb by the wonder of the news, the door was opened

And he bent down and whispered in her ear. I could not hear what he said. But Babby's reply is, however, worthy of recording, inasmuch as it caused me many conjectures at the time.

"I never thought o' looking aneath his pillow when he was sleepin'!" she said. With a very curiously bow the old butler asked my pardon for keeping me waiting and then apologized frankly for the mistake made by Babby!

"She is a woman well stricken in years, mem," he said, "ye'll just need to excuse Babby!"

"Deed an' I'm no near sae stricken in years as your ain sel," Duncan Grier—cried the indignant lady, "na—no by a half half-dizen o' years! Hear ye that!"

But Duncan waved her away with calm superiority, conducted me up the rugged path with the height of dignified embarrassment.

"Babby, gang ye into the hoose and get a dish o' tea ready," he cried. "Dinna spare the leaves! And abune a', see that the water is boiling afore ye poor it in. In-deed, mem, Mr. John would have been maist disappointed if he had misaed your vesmit. (Come out o' that ye illest wee baistie!) I get pardon, miss, but I am afraid your young gentleman will break his neck if he persists in crawling on the roof! There, what did I tell ye, ye camstery hule o' a redeulous callant!"

Little Johnny had indeed fallen through the thatched and rotted roof of one of the seldom used sheds in rear of the farm-stand and was presently rescued, howling lustily, by a single leg which appeared waving among the debris. Duncan held him in the air as he might have done a kicking rabbit, and quaked him vigorously. In-deed, I fear that he performed the operation with so heavy a hand that in more than one sense it might be called a dressing-down.

I think the blood must have risen quickly to my face, for I could feel myself turning hot all over.

So intent was I on the fate of my ally that I did not notice that John Glendonwyn himself was standing, with a strange expression of wonder on his face, in the doorway of his cot. He was, I saw once, much paler than he had been—indeed, thinner altogether—but with a determined, masterful and many expression such as I had never seen on his face before.

And the next moment I was holding his hand, while he was asking concerning my father, my sister and the others—doubtless wondering what in the world had brought me to the herds house in the Bennagower.

By this time Duncan Grier had completed little Johnny's toilet and set that enterprising infant on his feet. Johnny was crying, if one may use that expression of such a darling child, most violently. And old Babby had much difficulty in conducting him off respectfully before his young master, owing to the fact that in the midst of his explanations he would suddenly find himself upon round by the frantic lunge of Johnny, who, having set down poor old Duncan as the cause of his misfortunes, was now trying furiously to reach his black stockings with his little iron-shod shoes.

Whereupon I pounced upon Johnny and bade him be a good boy or I would dispatch him back to his mother that same night.

"Shan't go!" exclaimed the hopeful son of the house. "I doesn't min' mother much, but I hate school. Ye, I do! New teacher is so ugly!"

"Oh, Johnny," I said reproachfully, "but if she is good, what does it matter whether she is pretty or not?"

"Does though!" said Johnny, struggling to be free. "He finks so—(here he pointed to John Glendonwyn) doesn't turn to our school noo, but attin' new teacher turned. Mother—she thaid so only last night!"

"Would you like some lumps of sugar, Johnny," said John, hastily, from the doorway. "I am afraid there are no brandy balls up here. You should have sent me word you were coming."

"What are you saying?" said Johnny (which being interpreted, meant that Johnny desired to be introduced to the aforesaid lumps of sugar).

"Come away in!" said John. "I have but one room, but the good people make me both comfortable and happy—that is, as far as I can be—right now."

He stopped and looked very curiously at me. It was certainly a beautifully neat little room, with no appearance of a bed in it that I could see except that there was a screen in the corner which had evidently served (and probably did so yet) upon occasion as a clothes horse.

After he had brought us into his room John Glendonwyn stood before me scarce

knowing what to say, waiting, I think, till I had opened my mission. But I knew better than to attempt anything of the kind with parity.

"Will you give Johnny some sugar?" I said, "that will keep him quiet till it is done!"

John went out quickly, instantly followed by Johnny, who flung himself off the seat on which I had just arranged him, and plunged after his host through the door, shouting, "Me tumlin' to see you get it minsel!"

"Think I will not give you enough?" said John. "Have the loaf!"

"Fanks, I will!" said the literal Johnny, and appeared forthwith in the tiny "ben-the-house" with a scarce-broken white cone of lump-sugar under his arm.

"Johnny, dear," I remonstrated, "you will make yourself ill. Give it to me and I will break you off a bit."

"No, an't!" said the obedient little man. "Have eaten free—O, ever so much bigger nor that! 'Tis all right, taster, dear!"

Then I began to tell John Glendonwyn the message my father had sent me to deliver and when he heard of the gift of the house and five acres of freehold he rose from his chair excitedly.

"O," he cried, "it is like new life to me to even hear of the possibility of such a thing. But we cannot take the property as a gift. That is not to be thought of—we will give your father any rent—we will pay a price."

"John," I said, "you ought to know my father by this time. What he does he will do his own way, if at all. All is completed. There are the title deeds!"

"While John stood, struck dumb by the wonder of the news, the door was opened

And he bent down and whispered in her ear. I could not hear what he said. But Babby's reply is, however, worthy of recording, inasmuch as it caused me many conjectures at the time.

"I never thought o' looking aneath his pillow when he was sleepin'!" she said. With a very curiously bow the old butler asked my pardon for keeping me waiting and then apologized frankly for the mistake made by Babby!

"She is a woman well stricken in years, mem," he said, "ye'll just need to excuse Babby!"

"Deed an' I'm no near sae stricken in years as your ain sel," Duncan Grier—cried the indignant lady, "na—no by a half half-dizen o' years! Hear ye that!"

But Duncan waved her away with calm superiority, conducted me up the rugged path with the height of dignified embarrassment.

"Babby, gang ye into the hoose and get a dish o' tea ready," he cried. "Dinna spare the leaves! And abune a', see that the water is boiling afore ye poor it in. In-deed, mem, Mr. John would have been maist disappointed if he had misaed your vesmit. (Come out o' that ye illest wee baistie!) I get pardon, miss, but I am afraid your young gentleman will break his neck if he persists in crawling on the roof! There, what did I tell ye, ye camstery hule o' a redeulous callant!"

Little Johnny had indeed fallen through the thatched and rotted roof of one of the seldom used sheds in rear of the farm-stand and was presently rescued, howling lustily, by a single leg which appeared waving among the debris. Duncan held him in the air as he might have done a kicking rabbit, and quaked him vigorously. In-deed, I fear that he performed the operation with so heavy a hand that in more than one sense it might be called a dressing-down.

I think the blood must have risen quickly to my face, for I could feel myself turning hot all over.

So intent was I on the fate of my ally that I did not notice that John Glendonwyn himself was standing, with a strange expression of wonder on his face, in the doorway of his cot. He was, I saw once, much paler than he had been—indeed, thinner altogether—but with a determined, masterful and many expression such as I had never seen on his face before.

And the next moment I was holding his hand, while he was asking concerning my father, my sister and the others—doubtless wondering what in the world had brought me to the herds house in the Bennagower.

By this time Duncan Grier had completed little Johnny's toilet and set that enterprising infant on his feet. Johnny was crying, if one may use that expression of such a darling child, most violently. And old Babby had much difficulty in conducting him off respectfully before his young master, owing to the fact that in the midst of his explanations he would suddenly find himself upon round by the frantic lunge of Johnny, who, having set down poor old Duncan as the cause of his misfortunes, was now trying furiously to reach his black stockings with his little iron-shod shoes.

Whereupon I pounced upon Johnny and bade him be a good boy or I would dispatch him back to his mother that same night.

"Shan't go!" exclaimed the hopeful son of the house. "I doesn't min' mother much, but I hate school. Ye, I do! New teacher is so ugly!"

"Oh, Johnny," I said reproachfully, "but if she is good, what does it matter whether she is pretty or not?"

"Does though!" said Johnny, struggling to be free. "He finks so—(here he pointed to John Glendonwyn) doesn't